

*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security*



**PAROLE BOARD**

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**RECORD OF DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**MICHAEL BOHANNON  
W90878**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Initial Hearing  
**DATE OF HEARING:** April 15, 2021  
**DATE OF DECISION:** December 6, 2021

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Collette Santa<sup>1</sup>

**DECISION OF THE BOARD:** After careful consideration of all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, the age of the inmate at the time of offense, criminal record, institutional record, the inmate's testimony at the hearing, and the views of the public as expressed at the hearing or in written submissions to the Board, we conclude by unanimous vote that the inmate is not a suitable candidate for parole. Parole is denied with a review in three years from the date of the hearing.

**I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

On October 25, 2007, in Suffolk Superior Court, Michael Bohannon pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in the death of Adornous Hazelwood. He was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. On that same date, he pleaded guilty to one count of assault by means of a dangerous weapon. This charge was placed on file.

On April 1, 2002, in Roxbury, Michael Bohannon exited a vehicle (operated by his sibling) and fired a rifle at 26-year-old Adornous Hazelwood. The shot did not strike Mr. Hazelwood. Mr. Bohannon returned to the vehicle, and his sibling drove away from the scene. Approximately two hours later, Mr. Bohannon encountered Mr. Hazelwood a second time in Roxbury and fired a rifle at him. The shot struck him in the back, causing grievous injuries. Mr. Hazelwood died the following day.

<sup>1</sup> Chair Moroney recused.

Mr. Bohannon fled to the Chicago area in the aftermath of the crime. He was arrested in Chicago on an indictment warrant in 2006 and was subsequently returned to Massachusetts.

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON APRIL 15, 2021**

Michael Bohannon, now 37-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board on April 15, 2021, for an initial hearing and was not represented by counsel. In his opening statement to the Board, Mr. Bohannon apologized to the victim's family and expressed regret for his actions. He acknowledged the impact his actions had on both the victim's family and his own family. Upon Board Member questioning, Mr. Bohannon said that he was accosted by Adornous Hazelwood, and several other individuals, on the day of the governing offense. After participating in a physical altercation with one of the members of the group, Mr. Bohannon claimed that Mr. Hazelwood grabbed him by the throat and proceeded to choke and rob him. Although he left the scene at the behest of an intervening friend, Mr. Bohannon returned in a vehicle with his sister to retrieve some belongings. Mr. Bohannon brought a rifle with him. Upon his arrival, Mr. Hazelwood began to approach him again. Mr. Bohannon stated that he fired the rifle in the air as a warning shot, denying that he attempted to shoot Mr. Hazelwood at that time.

Several hours later, Mr. Bohannon went outside after receiving information that Mr. Hazelwood was enroute to his home, armed with a firearm. Mr. Bohannon explained to the Board that, although he brought the rifle with him again, his intent was to diffuse the situation verbally. Mr. Bohannon further claimed that he attempted to speak with Mr. Hazelwood, but Mr. Hazelwood shouted threats and reached for his weapon. Mr. Bohannon then shot Mr. Hazelwood in the back, killing him. Mr. Bohannon fled to Chicago shortly after committing the crime. He stayed with his significant other, working there until he was arrested in 2006, when he was returned to Massachusetts. Mr. Bohannon claims to have suffered from guilt while residing in Chicago.

The Board questioned Mr. Bohannon as to his institutional adjustment in Massachusetts, noting that he was associated with several Security Threat Groups. Although Mr. Bohannon explained that he had renounced his membership in these groups, Board Members indicated that Massachusetts Department of Correction records indicate otherwise. The Board also questioned Mr. Bohannon about his history of disciplinary reports. Mr. Bohannon received several violent reports, including an incident in 2016, which involved an aggravated assault on another inmate with a weapon. Mr. Bohannon was transferred to a facility in Pennsylvania in 2018, where he has not incurred any additional disciplinary reports. Mr. Bohannon stated that he was initially ineligible to participate in programming due to an error in his classification status; the error has since been rectified.

Mr. Bohannon stated that he has completed several programs, including Anger Management, Responsible Fatherhood Program, and the High Risk Offender Program, while in Massachusetts. He obtained his GED in 2010. At the time of this hearing, Mr. Bohannon was enrolled in Violence Prevention through the Pennsylvania Department of Correction.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Bohannon stated that he worked in the kitchen at the Pennsylvania facility and recently received a promotion.

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<sup>2</sup> Mr. Bohannon completed the program in September 2021, providing a certificate of completion to the Board on September 28, 2021.

The Board considered oral testimony, as well as a written submission, in support of parole from several family members and friends of Mr. Bohannon. The Board considered a letter submitted by the victim's family in opposition to parole read by a victim services coordinator at the hearing. The Board also considered an opposition letter from the Boston Police Department.

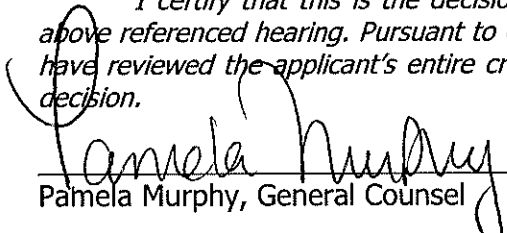
### **III. DECISION**

The Board is of the opinion that Michael Bohannon has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. Mr. Bohannon was 18 years old when he shot and killed Adornous Hazelwood. He then fled to Chicago and was arrested 4 years later. He has had a poor adjustment, requiring transfer to Pennsylvania in 2018, as a result of an aggravated assault where he stabbed an inmate in 2016. He has not formally renounced as a gang member and has engaged in limited programming. While Mr. Bohannon states he has tried to pursue programming, he has done little to address violence reduction and other areas of need.

The applicable standard used by the Board to assess a candidate for parole is: "Parole Board Members shall only grant a parole permit if they are of the opinion that there is a reasonable probability that, if such offender is released, the offender will live and remain at liberty without violating the law and that release is not incompatible with the welfare of society." 120 C.M.R. 300.04. In forming this opinion, the Board has taken into consideration Mr. Bohannon's institutional behavior, as well as his participation in available work, educational, and treatment programs during the period of his incarceration. The Board has also considered a risk and needs assessment and whether risk reduction programs could effectively minimize Mr. Bohannon's risk of recidivism. After applying this standard to the circumstances of Mr. Bohannon's case, the Board is of the opinion that Michael Bohannon is not rehabilitated and, therefore, does not merit parole at this time.

Mr. Bohannon's next appearance before the Board will take place in three years from the date of this hearing. During the interim, the Board encourages Mr. Bohannon to continue working toward his full rehabilitation.

*I certify that this is the decision and reasons of the Massachusetts Parole Board regarding the above referenced hearing. Pursuant to G.L. c. 127, § 130, I further certify that all voting Board Members have reviewed the applicant's entire criminal record. This signature does not indicate authorship of the decision.*

  
Pamela Murphy, General Counsel

  
Date